

The Prime Minister

The Newsletter of the Harvard Speech and Parliamentary Debate Society

HSPDS 25th Anniversary

Fall 2006

Open Letter from Gordon Bell, '83 Founding President

Could it be 25 years? It can when a breakfast meeting of the current leaders of HSPDS convenes at the Charles Hotel, and the leaders are half my age. Never in our wildest dreams did we founding mothers and fathers of HSPDS hope to build a force in American debate. We thought simply that we were getting off campus, seeing old friends and making new. At times, it seemed that we were also honing our debate skills. Now we feel like the guys who invented champagne and Brie: We were aiming for good, and it turned out great.

Some things have certainly changed – alas, Bud Light, our first official sponsor, no longer supports the team – but HSPDS members are still working hard, having a great time, and racking up success along the way. Now we, an open group of alumni, want to

lay the groundwork for the future, and we'd like to have your support.

I met with Dean Gross on Saturday, September 30th, and he was enthusiastic about our plans to organize and assist HSPDS. He has agreed to help schedule a spring-term HSPDS pub round at the Queens' Head, the new Loker Pub. He supports our efforts to assist HSPDS with funding, contacts and guidance. And today's HSPDS leadership is eager to connect with alumni and take advantage of our support.

A lifelong pal, HSPDS founder, first vice president and second president, Tony DiNovi has issued a challenge grant of 25 thousand dollars; if we raise \$25k, he will match it. Bravo, Tony.

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25th Anniversary Event Planned at Harvard for November

Michael Birnbaum '08, President

Over the last quarter century, the Harvard Speech and Parliamentary Debate Society has established itself as the preeminent competitive force in American debate. After leaving their mark on the circuit, members of HSPDS have left Harvard to become leaders in all walks of life, from work in the public sector to the higher echelons of Fortune 500 companies.

In order to celebrate our past, exhibit our present, and plan our future, the current members of HSPDS are proud to invite all alumni back to Cambridge on the weekend of the 2006 Harvard-Yale game, November 17-19, to commemorate HSPDS' 25th anniversary.

This event, planned in conjunction with HSPDS' first president, Gordon Bell '83, will include an exhibition round by the current team, as well as guest speakers and a reception afterwards. There will also be a discussion about the future goals of HSPDS and the ongoing alumni outreach efforts.

Official invitations with the specifics of the anniversary have been sent through email. We look forward to reconnecting with our former members, whether they graduated a year or a generation ago. If you have interest in participating in or assisting in organizing this event, please email alumni@hspds.org. We look forward to seeing you!

HSPDS members are always interested in hearing from our alumni. If you would be willing to share your recent endeavors with the organization or have them published in a later edition of The Prime Minister, please e-mail us at debate@hspds.org.



Georgios Theophanous '06, Vasudev Vadlamudi '06, Allen Ewalt '06-'07, Kevin Kiley '07, and Alexander Schwab '07 celebrate a successful 2006 Nationals at Fordham

New Outreach Policy Recruits Hugo Chavez, Noam Chomsky

Tim Hwang '08, VP Tournament

As part of its new initiative to increase exposure on Harvard's campus, HSPDS has begun to develop a series of public debates between prominent figures in current events. In association with the Kennedy School of Government's Institute of Politics (IOP) and over 25 student organizations, we kicked off the project with a high-profile event between MIT's Noam Chomsky and Harvard Law School's Alan Dershowitz titled "Israel and Palestine: Where Do We Go From Here?" last November. The debate was a notable success, garnering coverage from a number of major news outlets such as CSPAN and the Boston Globe. By the end of the year, the debate had become one of the most highly viewed video streams on the IOP website.

This coming year, HSPDS sets its sights on an even larger and more ambitious goal: Hugo Chavez, President of Venezuela. While the event is still

taking shape, HSPDS plans to stage a high-profile debate on the future of Latin American politics.

In addition to maintaining support from the IOP, HSPDS has forged a network of influential campus organizations to sponsor the project including the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. In the midst of this, HSPDS is already working on a number of outreach events for this coming spring. Ideas have included a debate on the state of energy policy in the United States, a screening of "Why We Fight" – the award winning documentary on the rise of the military industrial complex, and a discussion with John Bolton, US Ambassador to the United Nations. In short, this year sees HSPDS poised to become an increasingly visible and influential force on campus as we continue to ramp up the scale of our outreach activities.

Presidential Report

Michael Birnbaum '08, President

This year is the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Harvard Speech and Parliamentary Debate Society, and I can proudly say that there is a lot to celebrate. The recent past has seen HSPDS expand from the areas in which it has always excelled into new avenues of public discourse on campus and new arenas of debate across the world.

The heart of HSPDS remains in the American Parliamentary Debate Association. In the last year, we again showed a level of competitiveness that few schools can hope to approach. Our successes included a team placing in the top five in the race for Team of The Year, ten debaters qualifying for the National Championships, and one of our novices winning Novice of the Year – a first for the Harvard Team.

HSPDS also made its presence felt internationally by sending debaters to British Parliamentary debate tournaments at Oxford University and the US Universities Debate Championship in California, and by sending four teams to the 2006 World Universities Debating Championships in Dublin, Ireland. We remain dedicated to establishing Harvard on the world stage and expanding our presence at this year's international tournaments.

There have been great strides made closer to home as well. After last year's wildly successful public debate between Noam Chomsky and Alan Dershowitz, there are now plans to continue our partnership with the Harvard University Institute of Politics to bring more regular debates about today's pressing issues between some of the world's leading thinkers. Additionally, HSPDS plans to take on a

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HSPDS Class of '06

Karima Porter '07, VP Finance

Congratulations to the HSPDS Class of 2006, a group of highly successful and dedicated debaters. Here's a look at where they are now:

Scott Lichtenstein, Chemistry, has been involved in the creation of an education company in the San Francisco Bay area.

Saw San Myat San, Government, is in Singapore serving as the assistant training and operations officer at the 13th Singapore Infantry Brigade. After this year, he will be working for the government in Singapore in either the Security and Intelligence Division or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to his army responsibilities, Saw San has also opted to coach the debate team of his alma mater, the Anglo-Chinese Junior College.

Alexander Schwab, Philosophy, is working in Los Angeles as a corps member with Teach for America, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising academic achievement among the underprivileged.

Georgios Theophanous, Economics, is working in the San Francisco Bay area as a Corporate Finance Business Analyst for McKinsey & Co. for the next two years.

Vasudev Vadlamudi, Economics, will join Bain & Company as an Associate Consultant in the Boston office.

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Now the ball is in our court; if you would like to participate in the 'Friends of HSPDS' alumni organization, please get in touch. My email is gbell@leggmason.com and I welcome your input and count on your support.

Gordon Bell,
Founding President of HSPDS (yes, I was duly elected)
AB 1983, MBA 1988

Presidential Report, continued from Pg. 2

founding role in Harvard's new Campus Political Society, a group founded to foster debate in the student body.

All of these expansions in our mission demand an improvement of our infrastructure as well. To this end, in the past year we have redoubled our fundraising efforts. In order to ensure that HSPDS is well equipped to expand into any role which the future may hold, we are in talks with the university and Gordon Bell, the first president of HSPDS, to establish an endowment under the Harvard Corporation.

As the new year starts, I can't help but brim over with excitement and pride at the individual and collective efforts which have brought the team to where it is now. We are collectively working to bring HSPDS's possibility and potential into the realm of reality. I hope that these achievements and everything else in this newsletter fills you with the same excitement as it does us, and that you join us in both celebrating both this year's milestone anniversary and working towards all that is possible to come.

HSPDS Capital Campaign Off to Impressive Start

Piotr Brzezinski '07, Emeritus VP Finance

Almost a year after its start, HSPDS's first fundraising drive has been a stunning success. Thanks to the generosity of our alumni, we have raised over 10,000 dollars. This money has helped support the first HSPDS team at the World Universities Debating Championships in several years, and it has laid the groundwork for a long-term endowment.

Since the last issue of the Prime Minister, we have made significant progress on a number of fronts.

Most notably, we have secured a space as one of the final student group endowments available through Harvard University. Due to the rapid increase in the number of student groups with endowments, the University is looking to sharply restrict the number of endowments it manages. However, HSPDS has been guaranteed one of the last places available under the older, more flexible, terms.

We are still looking to raise 15,000 dollars more, in order to qual-

ity for the endowment and establish a degree of financial security for HSPDS. Donations are, as always, tax-deductible through Harvard University. Previous donors have received their thank you gifts, in the form of plaques and gavels.

Currently, we operate essentially hand to mouth, depending on two events, our own parliamentary debate tournament and the policy debate team's high school tournament, for almost the entirety of our annual budget. This places our team at risk – if the LSATs were to occur on our tournament weekend, for instance, we probably would not be able to fund a full team for the year – and places limits on how many debaters we can support every weekend.

We hope to continue our fundraising over the course of the next year, kicking off this round with the 25th alumni anniversary event in November. We also hope to announce the formation of an alumni organization at that event.



HSPDS team photo, 2006

Annual Debating Update

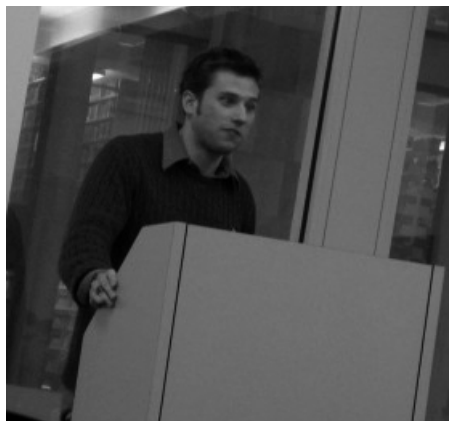
Allen Ewalt '06-'07, VP Internal Development

HSPDS finished off yet another remarkably successful season on the American Parliamentary Debate Association circuit. Alexander Schwab '06, former team president, and Georgios Theophanous '06 led the Harvard team as the league's fourth place "Team of the Year", while Zach Cafritz '07 and Piotr Brzezinski '07 received tenth place honors. First-year debater Ben Belser '09, fueled by a string of successes early in the year, finished as first place "Novice of the Year".

Harvard's debaters found victory throughout the spring season, clearing to elimination rounds at every single tournament. Schwab and Theophanous finished sixth at NYU, sixth at Mt. Holyoke, fourth at Cornell, and fifth at Yale. Impressively, they bested a highly talented field of alumni debaters at Boston University's "dino" tournament to claim the first place trophy. Cafritz and Brzezinski also continued their successes from earlier in the season, reaching finals at Mt. Holyoke College. Allen Ewalt '06-'07 and Saw

San Myat San '06 as well as Cafritz and team president Michael Birnbaum '08 closed out finals at Amherst.

Harvard novices also had a strong showing in the Spring. Anthony Carlson '09 and Rezwan Haque '09 finished as top novice team at BU, while Belser and Lewis Bollard '09 finished in third. Carlson and Haque won novice finals again at Mt. Holyoke. Brian Cantor '09 and Sergio Prado '09 reached nov-



Alexander Schwab '06 debating at NYU

ice semis at Mt. Holyoke and Cormac Early '09 and Juliet Samuel '09 reached novice finals at Providence College.

Harvard also made new progress

into the British Parliamentary arena. With the generous support of our alumni and a match grant provided by the University, HSPDS sent an unprecedented four teams to the World Universities Debating Championships in Dublin. Debating in an unfamiliar format, Schwab and Theophanous missed the break by just one win. Schwab and Myat San put this experience to good use at the Claremont Colleges in California, winning the first annual U.S. Universities British Parliamentary Championships.

Upon returning to campus, HSPDS has made an excellent start to the season. Birnbaum and Cafritz won the first tournament of the year at Johns Hopkins, while Brzezinski and Cafritz reached the semifinal round at Smith. Andrew Laing '08 and Ewalt also reached outrounds at the Wesleyan tournament. Ewalt, Birnbaum, Cafritz, and Belser have all won speaker awards so far. This strong performance, coupled with 4-1 records from each of our sophomore teams at Smith, bodes well for the Harvard debate tradition in the upcoming year.

Show Your Support for HSPDS!

We appreciate any support that you can provide. Support from our alumni and friends is vital to ensuring that the Harvard Speech and Parliamentary Debate Society is able to continue its mission on the Harvard campus and beyond. You can detach this form from the newsletter and mail it back to us at the address below. If you are interested in helping HSPDS in another way, e-mail finance@hspds.org.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

I would like to donate the following amount to HSDPS:

\$ _____

All checks should be made out to "Harvard University" with "HSPDS" in the memo line.

This form can be sent to the following address: Harvard Speech and Parliamentary Debate Society
c/o Harvard College
University Hall, First Floor
Box #268
Cambridge, MA 02145